International Seabed Authority ISBA/20/LTC/2

Legal and Technical Commission

Distr.: Limited
8 January 2014

Original: English

Twentieth session
Kingston, Jamaica
14-25 July 2014

Application for approval of a plan of work for exploration for cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts by the Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais S.A.

Executive summary*

1. Since its creation in 2009, the Programme for Prospecting and Exploration of Mineral Resources in the Equatorial and South Atlantic International Area (PROAREA), within the Interministerial Commission on Sea Resources of Brazil, has expanded its research activities on marine geology and biodiversity in the Equatorial and South Atlantic. PROAREA activities are developed by the Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Minerais S.A. (CPRM), under the coordination of the Ministry of External Relation. Many other governmental organizations participate in PROAREA, such as research institutions and members of the scientific community.

2. PROAREA has been developing activities in order to identify and assess the mineral potential of areas with economic and political strategic importance for Brazil, located beyond the limits of Brazilian national jurisdiction.

3. Preliminary surveys conducted by PROAREA on the Rio Grande Rise — a physiographic feature with a relief amplitude of up to 3,500 m on the ocean floor and located about 1,100 km from the coast of the Rio Grande do Sul State (Brazil) — indicate the presence, in this location, of cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts of relevant scientific and economic potential.

4. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the granting, administration, supervision and monitoring of exploration contracts in the Area — defined in article 1 of the Convention as "the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction" — is under the attribution of the International Seabed Authority, which develops and establishes specific regulations for each mineral resource.

* Submitted by the applicant.

14-20193 (E) 130114

Please recycle

5. In accordance with the Regulations on Prospecting and Exploration for Cobalt-rich Ferromanganese Crust in the Area (ISBA/18/A/11, annex), Brazil is submitting this application for approval of a plan of work for exploration in the Rio Grande Rise, to obtain a contract.

6. Brazil proposes that the exploration be conducted over a period of 15 years, covering a total area of 3,000 km^2, divided into 150 blocks of 20 km^2 each. Besides the activities of collecting mineral data, it will include the development of oceanographic and environmental studies and assessments. The Brazilian plan of work is divided into three phases of five years each, as follows:

(a) Phase I (years 1-5): prospecting on a regional scale with a view to defining the target areas and collection of environmental parameters;

(b) Phase II (years 6-10): evaluation of the mineralogical, structural and geomorphological and environmental characteristics of the areas of interest, as well as the necessary geological and geophysical surveys for detailing the mineral resource;

(c) Phase III (years 11-15): selection of areas for economic, environmental and technical viability of mineral deposits, as well as evaluation of ore recovery systems, with a view to possible adaptation of the plan of work and the development of exploitation activities, in accordance with specific regulations to be approved by the Authority in the future.

7. The plan of work presents the technical and financial information of the applicant (CPRM), and meets all requirements established by the Regulations (see para. 5 above), including with regard to technical, financial and environmental issues.